



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**TAJIKISTAN**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **USAID Announces the Third Year of Community Connections Programs in Tajikistan and Begins its 2008 Recruitment Campaign**

Dushanbe, Tajikistan. On November 27, 2007 at the State Complex "Kohi Vahdat" a press conference was held to announce 2008 Community Connections Programs funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Approximately 50 area experts in the fields of municipal planning, loan management, library management, hospital management, and energy management will be selected in an open, nationwide, merit-based competition to participate in the program.

The Community Connections Program provides an opportunity for community leaders and subject area professionals from Tajikistan to go on three week professional exchanges in the United States, while living with host American families. Citizens of the United States and Tajikistan work together to address common professional challenges while expanding their social and cultural understanding.

During the press conference, speakers from USAID and the Community Connections Program explained how the program works, including selection criteria for program participants. All applicants receive equal consideration, and are evaluated by selection committees that include US Embassy representatives and field experts. The Community Connections program looks for individuals who are flexible, open-minded, interested in new ideas, and committed to sharing knowledge gained during the program with colleagues. Program alumni from previous years also shared their experiences from their time in the United States on the Community Connections program.

"The Community Connections program offers a unique opportunity for emerging Tajikistani leaders from every region representing a wide range of professions, positions, and expertise to get acquainted with ordinary Americans, and to address shared professional challenges with American colleagues working on those very same issues," commented Steve Kelley, Deputy Director of USAID in Tajikistan. Since November 2005, the Community Connections Program has facilitated the participation of 79 Tajikistanis in professional development and cultural exchanges in the United States. In 2006 and 2007, Community Connections sent groups to the U.S. to exchange ideas on healthy lifestyle education, eco-tourism, religion in a secular society, fruit and vegetable processing, secondary school textbooks, journalism instruction, young women leadership, and communicable disease prevention. A group of small and medium enterprise developers will travel to the U.S. in January 2008.

More information on 2008 programs, eligibility, application procedures, and deadlines are available and regularly updated at: [www.cc-car.org](http://www.cc-car.org).

United States Agency for International Development (USAID): In 1993 USAID started providing technical assistance to Tajikistan. Since then the American people through USAID have given more than 270 million USD in support of economic growth, democratic institutions, health care, and education systems in Tajikistan. USAID is the biggest donor organization from a single country working in Tajikistan.

Community Connections Program/USAID: The Community Connections Program is one of many assistance projects in Tajikistan funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on behalf of the American people.